



News Release

Contact: Martin Ackley, Director of Public and Governmental Affairs, (517) 241-4395
Bill DiSessa, Spokesperson, (517) 335-6649

***DO UNTO OTTERS* IS FEATURED TITLE IN 2015 MICHIGAN READS! PROGRAM**

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LANSING – A children’s book about good-mannered forest creatures by Michigan author Laurie Keller has been named as the featured title in the 2015 “Michigan Reads! One State, One Children’s Book” program, the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) announced today.

Keller, who grew up in Muskegon and now lives on the state’s southwest side, wrote and illustrated *Do Unto Otters* (Henry Holt, 2007). The book tells a story of how Mr. Rabbit learns, with sage advice from Mr. Owl, to get along swimmingly with his new neighbors, the Otters, by simply treating them the same way he would want to be treated – the Golden Rule.

“Reading can be fun and entertaining while teaching us something at the same time,” State Superintendent Brian Whiston said. “Having all children reading at grade level by the end of third grade remains a top priority of the MDE.”

Keller has written and illustrated a number of children’s picture books and also illustrates books for other authors. She presents on her work for children and adults at schools, libraries and other events.

The Library of Michigan (LM) coordinates “Michigan Reads!” The program is devoted to increasing early childhood literacy and pre-reading readiness. Programming, events and author visits are scheduled throughout the state in September and October. The program’s official launch is Tuesday, September 15 at the Beagle Elementary School in Grand Ledge.

Michigan Reads! is modeled after the “One Book, One Community” concept and is designed to emphasize the importance of shared reading practices with babies, toddlers, preschoolers, and young school-age children. These practices set the stage for fluent reading achievement in children as they enter school.

“This year’s Michigan Reads! program should help prompt Michigan residents of all ages reading aloud to children, inspiring a love of reading in both readers and listeners,” said State Librarian Randy Riley. “*Do Unto Otters* is a really fun way to bring children and parents together, reading and learning.”

The program is supported in part by the Institute of Museum and Library Services and partners with the Library of Michigan Foundation. Additional contributions come from Jackson National Life Insurance and Macmillan Publishers.

As a result of the Institute of Museum and Library Services support, the LM will provide a hardcover copy of *Do Unto Otters* and programming materials to all public libraries, elementary schools, Head Start and Great Start Readiness programs across the state. In addition, Keller will tour a number of Michigan libraries and schools.

“Michigan Reads!” provides librarians, early childhood educators, parents, and caregivers with ideas to help children develop literacy skills through play-based activities. Since its inception in 2004, the program aims to promote the value and benefits of reading early and often to children, to encourage family bonding through reading and to increase awareness and usage of Michigan's libraries as excellent resources for learning.

More information about “Michigan Reads!” – including dates and locations of author visits and materials for parents, teachers and caregivers – is available at www.michigan.gov/michiganreads.

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The Library of Michigan – Michigan’s official state library agency for more than 175 years – is part of the Michigan Department of Education. To learn more, visit www.michigan.gov/libraryofmichigan.

*Attached please find a cover photo of the book.